



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

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District Man Found Guilty of First Degree Murder and Assault with the Intent to Kill for the August 2008 Shooting of Two Brothers

WASHINGTON - Charles Elegalam, 23, of Washington, D.C., was convicted by a jury on Thursday, November 4, 2010 of crimes related to the August 12, 2008 slaying of Jason Fennell and shooting of Justin Fennell, brothers and both District of Columbia residents, in the 300 block of Decatur Street NW, Washington, D.C., U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

The verdict was returned in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Following the trial presided over by the Honorable Herbert B. Dixon, Jr., the jury returned guilty verdicts on charges of first degree murder while armed, assault with the intent to kill while armed, aggravated assault while armed, multiple counts of possession of a firearm during a crime of violence, and carrying a pistol without a license.

Sentencing is scheduled for January 13, 2011. The defendant faces a mandatory minimum sentence of thirty years imprisonment.

According to the evidence elicited during the week-long trial, Jason and Justin Fennell were crossing through the 300 block of Decatur Street, NW on their way home when they passed by Elegalam and another man. Justin Fennell stopped and asked the two men for a light. A brief argument ensued, but it was quickly resolved when Jason Fennell and the man with Elegalam realized they knew people in common. In fact, Justin Fennell also recognized Elegalam as someone with whom he had gone to middle school six years prior.

As Justin Fennell was watching Elegalam, he noticed that the defendant was holding a gun to his side. Justin Fennell pulled his older brother away from the conversation, and they began walking away with their backs turned towards Elegalam. Moments later, Elegalam lifted his gun, pointed it at Jason Fennell, and opened fire. Only a single bullet hit Jason Fennell, but that bullet went through his lung, aorta, and spine, and he died soon thereafter.

Elegalam then turned towards Justin Fennell, and began firing. Justin Fennell was shot between seven and twelve times, but managed to survive. After firing a total of fifteen times, the

defendant fled the scene, leaving both victims for dead. After the sounds of gunshots ended, a neighbor called 911 and came to Jason and Justin Fennell's aid. She asked Justin Fennell if he knew who the shooter was, and Justin Fennell answered in the affirmative.

In announcing the jury's verdicts, United States Attorney Machen expressed his appreciation to the Metropolitan Police Department, and particularly praised the work of Violent Crimes Branch Detectives Doug Carlson and Paul Regan. He also commended the work of Legal Assistant Kelly Blakeney, who helped prepare the case for trial, Litigation Technology Specialist Leif Hickling, who created graphics to help illustrate what happened the night of the murder, Intelligence Specialist Lawrence Grasso, who mapped out the use of the defendant's cell phone on the night of the murder, and Victim Witness Unit's Marcia Rinker, who helped reassure the victim's family throughout the investigation and at trial. Finally, he praised the outstanding work of Assistant United States Attorney George Pace, who indicted the case, and Assistant United States Attorney Sharad S. Khandelwal, who prosecuted the case at trial.

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